

Vacancy Announcement

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION

Vacancy Announcement Number: **CK245493**

Opening Date: 04/22/05

Closing Date: 5/13/05, 11:59PM EST

Position: FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE OFFICER (ENTRY-LEVEL)

FP-1101-05/04

Salary: \$38,636 - \$70,023 per year

Duty Location: Many vacancies WORLDWIDE

Announcement No: CK245493

Opening Date: April 25, 2005 Closing Date: May 13, 2005, 11:59PM EST

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE POSITION OF FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE OFFICER

THIS IS AN ENTRY LEVEL POSITION IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE AS A CAREER-CANDIDATE COMMERCIAL OFFICER LEADING TO CAREER STATUS. SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES WILL BE PLACED ON A RANK-ORDER REGISTER. OFFERS OF APPOINTMENT ARE MADE AS VACANCIES BECOME AVAILABLE BASED ON THE NEEDS

OF THE SERVICE. CANDIDATES MAY BE APPOINTED AT THE HIGHEST GRADE LEVEL (FP-4). SEE QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.

The U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce is a corps of over 1,700 American and foreign employees dedicated to helping American companies expand sales in overseas markets through an integrated network. Overseas, the Commercial Service is present in approximately 84 countries, which constitute more than ninety-five percent of the world market for U.S. exports. In the United States, the Commercial Service operates a hub-and-spoke network of approximately 100 Export Assistance Centers, which offer businesses a comprehensive array of export facilitation services.

Commercial Sections overseas are charged with representing the commercial interests of the United States. Commercial Officers:

- *Advise and assist individual U.S. firms seeking export sales and major project opportunities.
- *Develop marketing and commercial information.
- *Advocate on behalf of U.S. industry and service sectors to foreign governments and businesses.
- *Support U.S. Government/Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee programs and activities.
- *Organize and support trade promotion activities including trade fairs and trade missions
- *Participate in negotiations on general trade and investment issues.
- *Manage U.S. Commercial Service staff, prepare fiscal plans, and oversee daily operations.

In the United States, U.S. Commercial Service Officers introduce new-to-export U.S. firms to the basics of overseas marketing. In addition, they provide the following services:

- * Conduct one-on-one business counseling sessions with U.S. firms.
- * Work in partnership with U.S. Commercial Officers overseas to help establish or improve their foreign trade relationships.
- * Sponsor export seminars, conferences and workshops for business people and trade associations.
- * Direct and/or manage contacts with foreign governments and other organizations to influence business activities between U.S. companies and foreign markets in cases where relationships are complex because of factors such as legislative history, economic rivalry, or political instability.
- * Serve as an expert, or supervise others in the analysis of commercial issues requiring trade, economic, or business knowledge of one or more geographic or political regions.

THE SELECTION PROCESS:

The selection process will proceed in two phases. In the first phase, applicants will be rated on their responses to the questions contained in the on-line application. Errors or omissions may affect the score. Approximately 100 of the highest-ranking candidates who pass Phase I as determined by scores on the Occupational Skill Questionnaire, the Accomplishment Record and an evaluation of applications and resumes will be invited, at their own expense, to participate in an Assessment Center in Washington, DC during the last week of July/first week of August 2005.

Phase II, the Assessment Center, is a daylong testing process consisting of an oral examination on subjects of general and commercial interest, written exercises on trade-related themes, group/project negotiating sessions, and an in-basket test. Candidates will be evaluated on their depth and breadth of knowledge and experience on international trade and business related fields; their ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing; their skills in prioritizing and managing time and resources; and their ability to deal effectively with others.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE:

Foreign Service employees must be able to serve at a wide variety of overseas posts, some of which are remote, unhealthy, or have limited medical support. Therefore, each candidate must meet fitness standards that are often more rigorous than those of other professions. Medical disqualification renders a candidate ineligible for Foreign Service selection. While full medical clearance for overseas duty is an essential qualification for prospective Foreign Service employees, the Department of Commerce no longer considers the medical condition of eligible family members for pre-employment purposes. However, the Department still requires medical clearances for family members before they can travel overseas to accompany an employee on assignment at U.S. Government expense. Family members who, for medical reasons, are unable to accompany an employee on an overseas assignment are eligible for a separate maintenance allowance.

WORLDWIDE AVAILABILITY:

Worldwide availability is an essential qualification for appointment to the Foreign Service. Regardless of who administers the exam, the Department of State's Office of Medical Service determines whether a candidate is available for assignment to all Department of Commerce posts worldwide.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES:

The Department of Commerce provides reasonable accommodation to Foreign Service candidates with disabilities throughout the pre-employment process. In order to be considered

qualified a candidate must meet all requirements for a medical clearance from the Office of Medical Services, or receive a waiver of the worldwide availability requirement from the Employment Review Committee.

SECURITY CLEARANCE:

Because you are applying for a national security position, a comprehensive background investigation will be conducted to develop information to show whether you are reliable, trustworthy, of good conduct and character, and loyal to the United States. Candidates who are found unsuitable for the Foreign Service, or who cannot be granted a security clearance, are ineligible for appointment. It is the policy of the Department of Commerce to test finally selected applicants and employees for illegal drug use prior to employment or appointment to a Testing Designated Position (TDP). The job functions associated with these positions have a direct impact on public health and safety, the protection of life and property, law enforcement and security.

SALARY AND BENEFITS:

Officers earn a competitive salary and receive comprehensive federal benefits, including group life and medical insurance and retirement benefits. There are financial incentives for service abroad. Based on your assignment, you may be eligible to receive additional pay and allowances. At a number of locations in the U.S., employees receive locality pay. Overseas, employees receive housing or a housing allowance. Depending on the overseas post, employees may also receive hardship pay, education, and cost of living allowances.

APPOINTMENT TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE - GRADE:

Starting Foreign Service grade and salary are commensurate with experience. The current salary range for FP-5 is \$38,636 to \$56,738; for FP-4, \$47,682 to \$70,023 per annum.

TENURE:

Employees entering the Foreign Service will have up to five years to become tenured, according to the provisions of the Foreign Service Act. Individuals may be reviewed by the Commissioning and Tenure Board in accordance with the Commission & Tenuring policy. During the five-year period, the employee will be required to attain proficiency in a foreign language at a level prescribed by and tested at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. If an employee does not receive tenure, he/she may not continue with the Commercial Service. New career-candidate officers must begin an assignment in an Export Assistance Center position (domestic U.S.) within their first seven years, unless they have had at least one year of previous Export Assistance

Center experience in the last five years before entering the Foreign Service of the Commercial Service.

TRAINING/CAREER DEVELOPMENT:

Frequent training is one of the benefits of the Foreign Service. Most officers will become proficient in one or more foreign languages and will receive a variety of professional development courses available at regular intervals throughout their career.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:

While not required for initial appointment as a career candidate, applicants proficient in foreign languages, especially Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and Russian are highly desired. Proficiency in foreign languages will enhance an applicant's competitive standing and proof of language proficiency will be required. Additional information will be provided to those invited to take the Assessment.

THE CAREER OF A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER:

As a Foreign Service Officer, you will have more than a job. You will have a way of life (most of it spent overseas) that requires uncommon commitment and features occasional hardships. It also offers you unique rewards and opportunities. You will need to be able to function both independently and as part of the Embassy team. You must be able to withstand the stress of frequent relocation, and be adaptable and sensitive to new cultures. As an official representative of the U.S. Government in a foreign setting, every Foreign Service Officer must be prepared to support publicly U.S. policy, regardless of possible private reservations.

ELIGIBILITY:

All applicants must meet the following criteria before being offered a career candidate position:

- Be a U.S. citizen,
- Be Between the ages of 21 and 59. The Foreign Service has a mandatory retirement age of 65.
- To retire under a Foreign Service retirement system, one must have at least five years service credit under the system.
- Be available for worldwide assignment including, frequent overnight travel, and willing to relocate approximately every 3-4 years.
- Pass a thorough background and security investigation leading to a positive suitability determination and a top-secret clearance.
- Along with accompanying dependents, meet rigorous medical clearance requirements.
- Receive a negative result on a drug test.

-Male applicants born after December 31, 1959 must certify at the time of appointment that they have registered with the Selective Service System, or are exempt from having to do so under Selective Service law.

QUALIFICATIONS:

There are minimum educational requirements to become a Foreign Service Officer. In addition, the questionnaire and other parts of the application process will evaluate whether the applicants' knowledge, skill, and abilities are relevant to the Foreign Commercial Service.

Applicants must:

1) Have 2 years of specialized experience.

Specialized experience is described as experience performing duties such as:

- * Assisting with the production of regional and/or international market analyses that are accepted as accurate and authoritative, and that form the basis of business or business-related decisions.
- * Assisting with the development or implementation of an international trade and marketing strategy for a U.S. product or service which includes identifying target foreign markets, analyzing the potential of these markets, developing a business plan to successfully establish business operations and promoting the product or service domestically or internationally.
- * Assisting in the planning and implementation of trade promotion events such as trade fairs or trade missions.
- * Actively participating in contacts with foreign governments or other organizations to influence the outcome of business activities between U.S. companies and foreign markets.
- * Contributing to the analysis of commercial issues requiring trade, economic, or business knowledge of one or more geographic regions.

OR

2) Have a Masters or other graduate degree and one year of specialized experience as described above.

Note: No applicant will be considered who has previously been separated from the Foreign Service under sections 607, 608, 610, or 611 of the Foreign Service Act as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu of separation under these provisions. In addition, no applicant who has previously been separated for failure to receive a career appointment under section 306 of the

Foreign Service Act of 1980 as amended, or who resigned or retired in lieu thereof will be considered.

HOW TO APPLY:

Online applications must be **submitted** by 11:59PM EST on May 13, 2005. Paper applications must be **received** by May 13, 2005.

Click here for the online application: <https://www.hr-services.org/usasonlineapp/usasonlineapp.aspx?strVIN=245493>

If you are not able to complete the application in one session or you need to leave the application to verify information, please **LOG OUT** and return to your application before the closing date. To return to the application, please go to <https://www.hr-services.org/usasonlineapp/usasonlineapp.aspx?str> and type in your social security number and last name in the spaces provided. The first page of your application will appear and your saved data will be displayed.

For questions pertaining to the online application, please call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) via email at kansascity@opm.gov or by phone at 816-426-5706.

Please allow yourself sufficient time to complete your application prior to the deadline in the event of computer malfunction or other delays. We strongly encourage you to apply online since this will allow us to most efficiently process your application. In the event that you are unable to apply online, you may request a paper application from OPM (kansascity@opm.gov or 816-426-5706). Requests for paper applications must be submitted by 5:00PM EST on May 6, 2005.

Address for submitting paper application materials:

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

601 East 12th Street

Room 131

Kansas City, MO 64106

ALL PARTS OF THE APPLICATION ARE SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION. DELIBERATE ATTEMPTS TO FALSIFY INFORMATION MAY BE GROUNDS FOR NOT EMPLOYING YOU OR FOR DISMISSING YOU AFTER YOU BEGIN WORK.

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IS COMMITTED TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT FOR ALL WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, RELIGION, AGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, DISABLING CONDITION, POLITICAL AFFILIATION, MARITAL STATUS, OR PRIOR STATUTORY, CONSTITUTIONALLY PROTECTED ACTIVITY.

THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDES REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES. APPLICANTS REQUIRING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR ANY PART OF THE APPLICATION OR HIRING PROCESS SHOULD SO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT. ALL DECISIONS FOR GRANTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION ARE MADE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.